

Is your Utility Ready for a Drought?

Continuously hot and dry weather brings rising demands for water and declining water supplies. Now is the time to get ready for a drought. Plan before the crisis hits. Here are some suggestions for developing and carrying out a drought management plan.

Know your system

- What are the system constraints? What type of peak summer demands do you expect?
- What are your treatment capacity and maximum expected supply changes?
- Who uses what quantity of water, when and how?
- Check last year's water use for golf courses, schools and hotels to project demands from high water use customers.
- Identify potential regional supplier interconnections, even though you may not be hooked up to them.

Find alternate sources

If you have access to a large system with a stable supply, arrange to use that source in case of an emergency. Reuse water for non-potable uses such as irrigation. Identify other sources such as:

- Shut-in wells
- Interconnections with utilities with excess capacity
- Small streams or ponds

Assess the impacts

What are the results of the actions that you may take? The first stage of most drought plans usually includes voluntary cutbacks. Make sure all stages of your drought plan are complete, including all mandatory restrictions, before you have to carry out the plan. Remember to think health and safety first!

Design the program and put it on paper

- List trigger conditions
- Define measures
- Assign responsibility within the city or utility
- Give authority to carry out certain measures without the need for emergency board or council meetings
- Rank measures in order of severity to correspond to the level of the situation



Enact ordinances

Have the necessary ordinances or bylaws in place so you can levy fines, stop service, or enforce penalties and special rates for high use during a declared emergency.

For more information contact the Water Quality Division of the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality at (405) 702-8100.